

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

AM 1. (Currently Amended) A tracheostomy device ~~characterized by its attractive aesthetic appearance and low profile~~ adapted to be mounted on an outer end of a tracheostomy pipe outer end worn by a user, in combination, the device comprising:

a low profile housing mounted upon the pipe outer end having an inlet a central port in fluid communication with the pipe and an outer port in fluid communication with fresh atmospheric air, the outer port having an inlet end for receiving the fresh air and an outlet end for delivering the fresh air to the central port; and

in communication with a check valve supported within the housing and in fluid communication with the ports, the valve movable to an open position during inhalation to permit fresh air to flow from the outer port into the central port to deliver the fresh air to a respiratory system of the user, the valve further movable to a closed position during exhalation to substantially prevent air flow from exiting the respiratory system out through the outer port such that a substantial portion of the exhalation air flow can be forced past vocal cords of the user, a check valve and an outlet port in communication with said check valve and the pipe outer end, and a decorative cover mounted upon the housing substantially enclosing said housing and giving said housing the appearance of neck jewelry.

2. (Currently Amended) A tracheostomy device as in claim 1, ~~said the~~ housing being removably attached to the pipe outer end.

3. (Currently Amended) A tracheostomy device as in claim 1, ~~said the~~ housing having an outer threaded periphery, and the device further comprising said a decorative cover being threaded upon said the housing threaded periphery.

4. (Currently Amended) A tracheostomy device as in claim 1, ~~said the~~ check valve comprising a substantially flat flexible element.

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

5. (Currently Amended) A tracheostomy device as in claim 4, ~~said the~~ check valve comprising a substantially flat flexible element hinged to said the housing a valve cover shaped to surround an outer periphery of the valve and secured in place by pressure exerted thereto by the covering.

6. (Currently Amended) A tracheostomy device as in claim 4, ~~said the~~ housing having a central axis defined by a center of the central opening and a valve axis defined by a center of the valve, said the check valve axis offset from the central axis element having an axis parallel to said housing central axis and offset with respect thereto.

7. (Currently Amended) A tracheostomy device as in claim 1, the housing including a lock to lock onto an outer flange connected to the pipe and a decorative flexible necklace attached to the pipe outer flange and adapted to encircle the a user's wearer's neck.

8. (Cancel) A tracheostomy device as in claim 7, said necklace having ends, a support mounted upon the pipe outer end, the support having ends, a necklace end being affixed to a support end.

9. (Currently Amended) A tracheostomy device ~~characterized by its attractive appearance and low profile adapted to be mounted on a tracheostomy pipe having an outer end having an opening, a support mounted upon the pipe outer end, the support having spaced connections, in combination, a low profile housing mounted upon the pipe outer end having an inlet port in communication with the atmosphere and a check valve, a check valve, and an outlet port in communication with said check valve and the pipe outer end, a flexible, aesthetically and attractive necklace having ends, said necklace being attached to the support, and a decorative cover mounted upon said housing substantially enclosing said housing and giving said housing the appearance of jewelry.~~ adapted to be mounted on an outer end of tracheostomy pipe worn by a user, the device comprising:

a cap;

a housing secured to the cap and mounted upon the pipe outer end, the housing having a central port in fluid communication with the pipe and an outer port in fluid communication with fresh atmospheric air, the outer port defined by a channel extending from an inlet end to an outlet end and covered by the cap such that the covered channel provides a passageway for fresh air received at the inlet end to be communicated to the outlet end for delivery to the central port; and

a valve supported within the housing and in fluid communication with the ports, the valve operable during inhalation to permit fresh air to flow from the outer port into the central port to deliver the fresh air to a respiratory system of the user, the valve further operable during exhalation to substantially prevent air flow from exiting the respiratory system out through the outer port such that a substantial portion of the exhalation air flow can be forced past vocal cords of the user.

10. (Currently Amended) A tracheostomy device as in claim 9, the housing including a lock to lock onto an outer flange connected to the pipe and at least one necklace end being removably attached to the housing a support connection.

11. (Currently Amended) A tracheostomy device as in claim 8, said the check valve comprising a seat and a substantially flat valve element cooperative with said the seat to close the check valve during exhalation to prevent air flow to the outer port 50.

12. (Currently Amended) A tracheostomy device as in claim 8, said the housing having a circular threaded periphery, said the decorative cover having threads an internally threaded lip cooperating with said the housing periphery threads to secure the housing thereto ~~an a base extending between said lip.~~

13. (Currently Amended) A tracheostomy device as in claim 11, said the housing including a relief for locking to a protrusion on a base connected to the pipe. base having an outer surface and decorations defined on said the base outer surface.

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

14. (Cancel) A tracheostomy device as in claim 9, the visible dimension of said valve housing being approximately the same as the diameter of the pipe opening.

15. (New) A valve device for use with a tracheostomy pipe to deliver air to a respiratory system of a user during inhalation and to prevent air flow from exiting the pipe during exhalation so that the air can be forced past vocal cords of the user, the valve comprising:

a housing having a having a central port in fluid communication with the pipe and an outer port in fluid communication with fresh atmospheric air, the outer port having an inlet end for receiving the fresh air and an outlet end for delivering the fresh air to the central port;

a valve supported within the housing and in fluid communication with the ports, the valve having a flap movable to a first position during inhalation to permit fresh air to flow from the outer port into the pipe, the flap further movable to a second position during exhalation to block the outer port and thereby prevent air flow from exiting the pipe so that the air can be forced past the user's vocal cords.

16. (New) The valve device of claim 15 wherein the outer port comprises a channel extending from the inlet end to the outlet end, and the device further comprising a cap covering the housing such that the cap covers the channel to define a passageway for fresh air received at the inlet end to be communicated to the outlet end for delivery to the central port.

17. (New) the valve device of claim 16 wherein the inlet to the outer port and the central port are on the same side of the housing and not covered by the cap.

18. (New) The valve device of claim 16 further comprising a valve cover to secure the valve to the housing by compression provided by the cap, the valve having a first side in contact with the housing and second side in contact with the cap.

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

19. (New) The valve device of claim 18 wherein the valve cover further includes a post to offset the valve from the cap such that air can flow from the outer port to the central port during inhalation.

20. (New) The valve device of claim 15 wherein the outlet of the outer port is offset from the central port.

21. (New) The valve device of claim 15 only comprising the housing, the valve, the valve cover, and the cap to limit a thickness of the valve device.

22. (New) The valve device of claim 21 wherein the thickness is less than 3/8 inches.

BEST AVAILABLE COPY